

JOIN THE RANKS.

It is far easier to do Christ's work, and do it well if one allies himself with Christ's followers. Not one Christian in twenty can maintain the desired standard of personal piety and spiritual efficiency outside of the Church. If he could, it would not justify his remaining without. Every such Christian may do much good but he also is certain to do grave harm. Inevitably his example is quoted—and misrepresented—by others, and often is even made by many an excuse for not beginning christian life at all.

Guerrilla warfare is neither very respectable nor very effectual, and the unattached Christian, so to speak, is neither as safe, nor as consistent in his independence as he needs to be, nor does his work for God prove as fruitful. He always is at a disadvantage, because he refuses to put himself into harmony with the nature of things, and the plan of Christ, which bids him become an earnest and active church member, as well as a Christian.—*Congregationalist*.

DANGER FROM EVIL THOUGHTS.

There is a well-defined distinction between many of the precepts of revealed law and those of the laws dependent upon custom or enacted by the legislatures. For example, these laws do not undertake to deal with the intentions or plans formed by any person, no matter how wicked, malicious, or criminal such intentions or plans may be, so long as they are not put into practice or communicated to others. They are not punishable, except when put into actual exercise, or made the subject of conspiracy, and the like; and in such a case they serve merely to aggravate the guilt of the offender. But revealed law on the contrary, concerns itself with the thought and purposes of men, as well as with their acts whether secret or overt. It forbids us willingly to entertain any thought or intention that might be deemed criminal, unlawful or improper if reduced to practice. Its prohibition is as pronounced against malicious, mean, and degrading thoughts, as against acts of corresponding nature.

And this is eminently just and proper. Every time we willingly entertain any thought or form any purpose, good or bad, recurrence becomes more natural and plain. Furthermore, frequent repeti-

tion in that direction leads almost inevitably to putting the thought or purpose into effect.

Besides, many persons who have closely observed the workings of the human mind, claim that a malignant or degrading thought, repeatedly entertained, may do so much to corrupt the heart, sear the conscience, and lower the moral standard, as though it were actually carried into exercise. Under such circumstances, religion is manifestly right in making this distinction and placing its veto upon degrading thoughts and criminal purposes. In this and many other particulars the service rendered by religion in the economy of human life is of the utmost importance.

ENCOURAGEMENT.

Have you ever felt how a little encouragement helps you on your weary round of duties?—how the drooping spirits and the flagging energy revive under the genial warmth and helpful stimulant of the kindly word or deed?

Upon children the effect of encouragement is very marked; beneath its smile, shyness, coldness, and dullness seem to melt away; when, after some naughty fit, the little heart is swelling, the conscience is troubled, and the desire "to be good again" is awakened, a few words of encouragement may settle the matter, and produce lasting good; whereas hasty, sharp words and cold looks send the timidly put forth effort back again; clouds settle down thicker than ever, and the child is pronounced to be more sulky and naughty than before. Doubtless true; but some of this at least might have been prevented by discernment, and at the cost of a little trouble.

Children are sometimes half ashamed shaking off the naughty fit; they want to say they are sorry but something holds them back. When they make their half frightened, and often very ungracious and awkward advance, let us beware of treating it hastily and coldly; we may be doing more harm than we are aware of, by hardening and blunting the feelings of the little ones.

Upon those who are wavering and tottering between right and wrong, the effect of a few words of encouragement may be very great.

Let us think before we cast away the opportunity of doing such Christ-like work.